

SENATE FINANCE & CLAIMS

Exhibit No. 8
Date 3-22-11
Bill No. HB 230

BROADWATER COUNTY

MONTANA

515 Broadway, Townsend, MT 59644

March 22, 2011

Regarding: Please vote DO NOT PASS on HB 230

Dear Senate Finance and Claims Committee,

Changing Broad of Crime Control (BCC) from its independent status under the Department of Justice to the Department of Corrections may seem easy and quick with no down side. However, the risks associated with this change are substantial. Broadwater County has utilized grants through the BCC for years to help fund Victim/Witness, Mental Health, Juvenile Justice Services, D.A.R.E., Underaged Drinking Enforcement, Law Enforcement, and a variety of Educational Programs. These programs, the people they have helped and the people they employ are all in jeopardy should this bill pass. The only question is for how long, one month? A year? Indefinitely?

According to the various granting agencies the de-obligation and re-obligation process would take at least 30 days. In fact, of the twelve agencies queried, four stated the change would halt grants for up to a year. And, two programs responded they cannot guarantee the grants would be re-obligated if they were de-obligated to accommodate the change to BCC.

For our county, this is a big impact. One to one and a half or two jobs will likely be lost as they are funded by grants that come through the BCC.

\$70,000 is currently being used for three active grants, Victims Advocate/Restitution Officer, Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws, and Storytelling for Empowerment. Those funds will be delayed for months at best, and possibly lost. Can these programs and the people they are helping responsibly be put on hold and in limbo? And what is the long term ramification to our budgets in fighting crimes that could have been prevented? We won't know that answer for some time.

The cost of Crime Prevention is said to be 4-10X less expensive than the cost after a crime has been committed.

This bill could easily end up costing Broadwater County citizens and Montanans far more than the projected \$200,000 over two years' savings.

Please, DO NOT pass HB 230.

Sincerely,

Board of County Commissioners, Chair- Laura Obert, Gail M. Vennes, Elaine Graveley

Sheriff, Brenda Ludwig; County Attorney, John Flynn; Justice of the Peace, Gary Olsen

Clerk of Court, Val Hornsveld; Clerk & Recorder, Treasurer, Superintendent of Schools, Rhonda Nelson